

AN
ADDRESS
DELIVERED BEFORE THE
PHRENAKOSMIAN SOCIETY

OF
PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE,

AT THE CELEBRATION OF THEIR TENTH ANNIVERSARY,
February 22, 1841,

BY
CHARLES E. LEX, ESQ.

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Pennsylvania College, Feb. 22d, 1841.

TO CHARLES E. LEX, ESQ.

SIR,—The members of the Phrenakosmian Society having heard with great pleasure your able and truly eloquent address, return you their sincere thanks, and respectfully solicit a copy for publication. We are, sir, with sentiments of the highest esteem,

Respectfully yours,

JOHN BRODHEAD,
JOHN KOHLER,
WM. H. HARRISON,
OSCAR BAUGHER,
AARON J. KARN,
Committee of Arrangement.

Gettysburg, Feb. 22d, 1841.

GENTLEMEN,—Conscious as I am of the imperfections of the Address I had the honor of delivering before you this evening, your flattering note scarcely leaves me any other alternative than that of placing the manuscript in your hands. With my best wishes for the prosperity of your Society and the happiness of its individual members, I remain,

Yours, respectfully and truly,

CHARLES E. LEX.

TO MESSRS. BRODHEAD, KOHLER,
HARRISON, BAUGHER, KARN,
Committee of Arrangement.

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE
PHRENAKOSMIAN SOCIETY,—

Each returning Anniversary of the Association to which you are attached forms a period, in its history, of interest and importance. Of interest, because upon occasions like this, the mind naturally reverts to the past, and memory is present to scatter her choicest flowers over scenes of intellectual enjoyment in which you have participated during the year which has now terminated its course. Of importance, because the retrospect thus made should be productive of renewed ardor in the prosecution of the important duties in which you are engaged, and of more vigorous determination to secure the inestimable advantages held forth to each participant in collegiate training and discipline.

Such being the results which this occasion is designed to accomplish, suffer me, in ~~the~~ furtherance of the same, to call your attention to a subject which has been suggested to my mind by the literary institution to which your Society is attached. Reared as it has been on principles which had their origin in a far distant land, what could furnish more profitable topics for meditation, than the history of that country and the great and important events which have dis-

tinguished its career among the nations of the earth? To a theme so full of interest, I invite your consideration at the present time.

To the zealous student of history, the first indications of national existence are often as replete with interest as subsequent developments of maturity and vigor. Communities, like individuals, present different traits of character at different periods of their existence. Some there are who appear, at their very outset endued with full strength and energy, and prepared at once to assume a lofty station of honor and influence, whilst others, under the same circumstances, exhibit nothing to distinguish them from the mass by which they are surrounded. Nor does the comparison fail in their subsequent history. The brilliant promises of greatness which mark the early career of some, serve but to dazzle the beholder for an instant and then are quenched forever; whilst the pale and glimmering light of others, so feeble that every passing breath of heaven would seem its sure destroyer, is increased, by slow degrees, to noontide glory and effulgence. As the eye wanders over the records of the past, each nation, as it becomes prominent on the great theatre of action, presents for our consideration new diversities of character and affords fresh material for study and examination.—The learned Egyptian, the heaven-directed Hebrew, the ambitious Roman, the brave yet polished Grecian, and the bold Goth, fierce and impetuous as the

icy blast of his native home, follow each other in quick succession, and excite our admiration, as their various courses of glory and distinction are unfolded before us.

And yet, however interesting all the annals of by-gone days may appear, there are still certain portions which must ever command our peculiar attention, and elicit a more than ordinary share of observation and research. Such are those periods, when the history of a single people, embracing within their vast limits every quarter of this known globe, becomes the history of the world.

We, who live at the present day, when power and dominion are nicely distributed among the nations of the earth, can scarcely form an adequate idea of the all-pervading sovereignty of the Romans, at the proud moment when their Imperial City was acknowledged the Mistress of the Kingdoms. To contribute to so magnificent a result, victory had every where perched upon their banners, and monarch after monarch had been forced to march as a degraded captive in the triumphal processions of their successful generals. But the cause of their greatness became also the cause of their decay,—and, whilst the enervating influence of such unparalleled success was generating seeds of destruction even among themselves, the frozen regions of the North, deemed too cold and inhospitable to be the residence of a great and powerful people, by those who

were basking beneath the sunny sky of Italy, were maturing a race of hardy warriors before whose resistless force the throne of the Cæsars was destined to totter and fall. The history of the Germans is full of interest, from their first introduction on the page of history until the present hour. Who that has read the account, afforded by Tacitus, of their habits of life, when discovered among their native forests by the Roman legions, but has not at the same time, felt his interest deeply excited by the description he has afforded of their primitive simplicity, their love of freedom, and the characteristics he has delineated of a nation uncontaminated by the vices which luxury and unbounded prosperity never fail of producing. The pure and simple manners of these hardy sons of the North, chaste and virtuous to a degree well worthy of imitation at the present day, form a striking contrast with the licentiousness which disgraced the Roman character. The sanctity of female reputation unknown to the latter, was cherished and maintained by the former, whilst the violation of conjugal duties, scarcely deemed an offence by the polished inhabitants of the seven-hilled City, was regarded as a crime, inexpressible in its character, by the blue-eyed German, in his rude hut on the banks of the Rhine.

Great and powerful was the influence to be exerted on the world by these barbaric tribes. The Roman Eagle was soon made to tremble before their

vigorous resistance against the encroachments of a foreign foe upon their native territory. The same love of freedom which led them to submit to no power among themselves, superior to the will of the people, expressed in their national councils, rendered them invincible, and nerved their arms in defence of their firesides and their homes. The suicidal despair of Varus, and the maddened phrenzy of the Emperor, who dashed his head against the walls of his palace, and vainly called upon the unfortunate general to restore the legions he had lost, bore ample testimony to the decisive defeat they had sustained from Arminius, the ardent champion of his country, in her opposition to Roman influence and authority. Deeply, indeed, was the spirit of patriotism implanted in his breast, when the blandishments of a polished court could not lure him from his duty, or the dignity of knighthood conferred upon him, prevent him from recognizing it as the gilded chain, used to fetter his soul, whose every aspiration was for the good of Germany. Although centuries have since rolled on, his deeds and his memory have not been forgotten in the land of his birth,—his enthusiastic countrymen are now engaged in the erection of a monument, which shall worthily commemorate his prowess; and when the time shall come for the deliverance of Germany from those who, claiming a divine right to govern, oppress and grind down their subjects, and lord it over God's heritage, the name

of HERMANN will be a watchword in the sacred cause, and render successful the struggle that shall then be made for liberty.

The victory gained by this illustrious chieftain was powerful in its consequences, and not without effect upon us who live in modern times, and in a country unknown for ages after it was achieved. Far different might have been our condition, had the legions of Rome been successful. The spirit of Independence might have been checked forever in the bosom of our Saxon forefathers, and the reduction of their country, as a Roman province, have utterly extinguished that glow of patriotism, which, in after generations, was destined to be productive of great and important results. The tree of liberty, however, was not doomed to be scathed and destroyed by the myrmidons of tyranny, when it grew in native vigor on the plains of Germany. Its precious seed was borne to Britain's favored ground, and the inhabitants of that sea-girt isle boast of their Saxon origin, and the love of freedom they have inherited, from the same venerated source. There the goodly plant had room to flourish, and many an arm was raised for its protection, as, from time, to time the hand of oppression attempted to strip its luxuriant foliage, and break its stately branches. The mail-clad barons of England stood as its trusty guardians on the plains of Runnemedes, and, with sword in hand, obtained from their tyrannical sovereign that

charter, which has been justly deemed the foundation of British Liberty. The voice of Parliament was raised, from time to time, to resist the encroachments of foreign influence, and the stern rebuke was given to the insidious designs of ecclesiastical intrigue, that the laws of England were not to be changed in order to further their machinations.— And when even the air of England was not pure enough for its nourishment and growth, Providence provided our Western land, and guided in safety the bark of the Pilgrim Fathers, until they again had deposited the like precious seed upon the rock of Plymouth. Here it has been planted in a congenial soil, and become a vigorous and stately tree, whilst the whole land is sheltered beneath its spreading branches. Its roots, firmly imbedded in the soil, have run beyond the bounds of our highly favored country, and in distant regions the green shoots are already appearing above the ground, and spreading their tender leaves to the admiring gaze of each philanthropist and patriot. All the efforts of despotism to eradicate and destroy them will be in vain, while the parent trunk survives. Successive nations will be protected under the same genial influence, until, at last, every vestige of oppression shall be banished from the earth.

It would be a task far transcending our present limits, to attempt a detailed history of the German Empire, from the early period to which we have al-

luded, to the present time. We can only notice a few of the most important events which diversify her annals. The victorious arms of Charlemagne, in the 8th century, forced her inhabitants to embrace the Christian religion, a process of conversion but ill understood in modern times, and by no means in accordance with the precepts of that divine system, whose influence he laboured to extend. Baptism was submitted to, after a resistance to his efforts of thirty years, and after the blood of thousands had flowed to prevent the introduction of Christianity, so disgraced by intemperate zeal and bigotry. After the death of Charlemagne, and during the succeeding ages, until the revival of learning and the Reformation, Germany, like the other countries of Europe, remained in an unsettled condition, a captive, like them, to the feudal system, ravaged by the contending forces of hostile barons, vexed by intestine commotions, struggling, at some periods, against the encroachments of ecclesiastical dominion, and at others, crushed by the power of papal supremacy. The crusades aroused her warlike population, and led many of them, along with the hosts of erratic knights, raised in all quarters of Europe, on the mad expedition of recovering the holy sepulchre from the hands of the Saracens, and she too shared in the beneficial results, which even their quixotic schemes accomplished. During the reign of feudal tyranny her lofty hills were crowned with the towering cas-

bles of warlike knights, whose mouldering ruins now serve to adorn the scenery of her favorite river, whilst her vallies were the scenes of rapine and plunder, induced by that widely-spread system.

At the period of the Reformation, Germany participated largely in its happy influence, whilst, at the same time, she suffered severely from the wars which partly originated from that memorable event. The well known 30 years' war filled the land with havoc and desolation. In more modern times the French revolution, which broke forth at the close of the last century, extended its effects to Germany, and its convulsive throes were experienced there, exciting that natural love of liberty which is implanted in the bosom of every man, but which, amid the direful events of that momentous period, was buried beneath the weight of maddened enthusiasm and folly. The subsequent career of Napoleon was also productive of important consequences; and in 1806, the Germanic empire was dissolved, and an union formed of sixteen princes, under the title of the Confederation of the Rhine, which acknowledged the Emperor of France as its protector. This confederation was but of short continuance—the battle of Leipsic destroyed the French dominion in Germany; and although the return of Buonaparte from exile again revived the din of war, yet a short period put an end forever to his schemes of ambition, and restored comparative tranquillity to Europe. The

Germanic Confederation was formed June 5, 1816, and still remains in existence, composed of the various powers, most of them but small principalities, into which the country is divided. How long this form of government will last, it is impossible to determine. Germany, like the rest of Europe, has felt the force of free institutions, and her sons are now sighing for the enjoyment of those privileges which other, and more favored, countries enjoy.—These will now be extended to her, and happy, indeed, will she be, when her industrious population shall no longer be ground down by taxes, her resources wasted in wars excited on the slightest foundations, and productive of ruin and distress, and when the tyrannical princes and petty sovereigns, who now hold their subjects in bondage, shall abdicate their thrones, and give place to the only form of authority that can elevate mankind, and confer happiness both on governors and the governed.

Interesting as are all the historical details of the periods to which we have briefly alluded, there are some which demand our peculiar attention, and are calculated to afford useful topics for consideration, on the present occasion. The debt of gratitude which the student owes to Germany, is neither trifling nor unimportant. Although the art of printing may have been known to the Chinese, centuries before its advantages were enjoyed in Europe, yet it is to Germany that we owe all the practical benefits of

a discovery, so important in its character in the history of man. Oh! it was a glorious light that then burst upon the world! Striking its beams into the regions of error and ignorance, and revealing even to the demons of hell, that their power was thenceforth to be abridged, and that mankind, under its influence, were to become wiser, and better, and happier! It was to the intellectual world, what the first bursting forth of light was to the material universe, when its rays penetrated the darkness of chaos at the bidding of Omnipotence,—like it, it was the forerunner of great events, destined to introduce a new era into the world, and impart life, and warmth, and coloring, to the wonderful occurrences which were rapidly to succeed in its train.

The advancement made in this great art has been gradual, from the moment of its first discovery, to the present time. It seems to have been wisely ordained that its perfection should be the slow growth of years, and that the mind, which had so long remained in darkness, should be gradually accustomed to the brilliancy of the light which was to be cast upon it. Each new discovery that now is made in any department of science, however wonderful or surprising, or however calculated to subvert a prior established order of things, is still, in one sense, not even unexpected, for we all know the gigantic powers of the mind, and that there is scarcely a limit to the ingenuity or energy of man. But in times like

those of which we have been speaking, when knowledge was but partially diffused, the sudden bursting of the fountain with resistless force, might have caused the destruction of those who required, at first, but the gentle droppings from its vast and capacious stores.

Like all other blessings we enjoy, whose value can only be estimated when we are deprived of them, the advantages we derive from the art of printing become fully apparent, when they are considered in moments of study and contemplation. Then it is we are made sensible of their excellence, as we place, in striking contrast, the scholar of former times, with his scanty means of information, and his meagre supply of books, each one costing as much as many a well selected library of the present day, with the student of modern times, holding familiar intercourse with the mighty spirits of every age, who have adorned the annals of literature, and untrammelled in his access to the congregated wisdom of the world. Our admiration is then excited as we compare the imperfect notions, formerly existing, of distant nations, with the full and important information now disseminated, of every portion of the habitable globe,—the crude and ridiculous ideas once existing upon matters of science, now well known and established, with the important investigations which are daily making into the mysterious workings of nature, or the vague and uncertain reports of

rumor, which was then almost the only vehicle for the transmission of the knowledge of passing events, with the well filled columns of the newspaper of modern times; that

“Folio of four pages, happy work,
Which not e’en critics criticise; that holds
Inquisitive attention whilst ’tis read,
Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,
Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break;
What is it but a map of busy life,
Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns?
There forests of no meaning spread the page,
In which all comprehension wanders, lost;
While fields of pleasantry amuse us here
With merry descants on a nation’s woes.
The rest appears a wilderness of strange
But gay confusion; roses for the cheeks,
And lilies for the brows of faded age;
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald;
Heav’n, earth and ocean, plundered of their sweets;
Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
Sermons, and city feasts, and favorite airs;
Ethereal journeys, submarine exploits,
And Katterfelto, with his hair on end
At his own wonders, wond’ring for his bread.”

To an American, this subject is one of peculiar interest. The liberty of the press is guarantied by our constitution, and is justly considered as one of the bulwarks of our freedom. The dissemination of knowledge is necessary for the perpetuity of our political institutions. The temple of liberty should be radiant with light, in order that the eager eyes of her votaries may discover the beauties of its architec-

ture, and the benignant countenance of the divinity presiding within its sacred fane. Let foreign journalists and book-makers sneer, if they please, at the fact, that the newspaper amongst us is the companion of the workingman, as well as the opulent citizen. We glory in it. The destruction of knowledge is the destruction of liberty. Tyranny alone closes up and taxes the channels of information, and forbids deep, thorough, and searching investigation into the conduct and motives of those who are entrusted with the reins of government. Vain and frivolous is the plea, that the multitude are not to be gifted with this privilege. How contrary is our own happy experience! Who will venture to compare the honest farmer of this country, with the degraded peasant of Europe; or the industrious mechanic of our land, with the operative on the other side of the Atlantic? Whilst the one understands his rights, and knows when they are usurped, the other, ignorant even of what he really needs, and worshipping unbridled indulgence instead of dignified freedom, becomes the tool of some designing leader, and fails to attain the object of his desires.

The effects of the discovery of printing, are well known and obvious. Its advantages were soon appreciated, and in them Germany participated largely, with other surrounding nations. The unsuccessful attempt of the Romans to reduce that country into the condition of a province, had an important bear-

ing upon its language, preserving its distinctive character, and occasioning the introduction of fewer Latin words, than are found in the languages of other countries subject to their influence. In force and beauty it will yield the palm to none, whilst, at the same time, it is rich and copious, and worthy of being the source of an extensive literature.

Germany, like all other ancient kingdoms, can produce specimens of composition of great antiquity. Every department of literary and scientific knowledge has been explored by her numerous authors, and all of them adorned by their genius and talents. In Mathematics, Philosophy and Astronomy, she boasts of great and powerful names. In the lighter departments of literature, she produces a crowded list of illustrious writers. Many of her poets have attained a distinguished rank in the temple of the Muses, and proved themselves their especial favorites. Time fails me to enumerate them, or even to give a passing glance at the peculiar excellencies of each. The moss-grown castles of the Rhine, and the ruined haunts of the warriors of olden times, have afforded food for the imagination, and furnished an ample field for the cultivation of the most exuberant fancy. The Drama, too, has had her votaries amongst their number, and her treasures increased by productions of more than ordinary excellence. The spirit of patriotism has burned in the hearts of many, and produced its ex-

alted strains. In sacred poetry the Germans are unrivalled, whilst the dignity of the Epic has been fully sustained by the renowned Messias of Klopstock. For many years the study of the German language was confined to but few among other nations; but latterly its knowledge has been widely increased, and a greater anxiety has been expressed for an acquaintance with its circle of literature.—One of the greatest writers of modern times, the incomparable Scott, made his first literary essay in the translation of German poetry, and derived no slight encouragement in the prosecution of his illustrious career, from the perusal of German authors professing congenial spirits with his own.

But the invention of printing is not the only circumstance, in the history of Germany, of interest and importance to the world at large:—there is another, of more special connection with the principles on which this literary institution was erected, to which I now invite your attention. It is not my purpose to enter into any examination of the ecclesiastical changes, which were produced by the reformation, or of the shades of doctrine of the various sects which have arisen since that period—these subjects belong to other hands than my own, and are more appropriate on other occasions than the present. Its general effect, and great leading principles are alone embraced in the consideration we purpose making of this important event.

To estimate aright the character of Luther, we must take into consideration the aspect then presented by the religious world, embraced, as it was, under one church, acknowledging one head, and asking implicit obedience to its tenets of faith, and interpretation of the sacred canon of Scripture.—Dissent from this church was sufficient to involve its promulgator in the severest anathemas, and subject him even to the forfeiture of life as a punishment for his temerity. But the time had come, when the great principle was to be established that, in matters of belief, men were not to be trammelled, or forced to subscribe to confessions of faith, repugnant to their private opinions, and wanting the sanctions of conscience. Although the leading doctrines of the Reformers were partially held by others at the same time with, and even previously to, the appearance of Luther, yet he was the first who successfully attempted to break the bonds, which had so long enthralled the world. The task he accomplished was one of no ordinary difficulty. To achieve the freedom of the mind, is an enterprize no less arduous in its character, than to secure the enjoyment of personal liberty. The general in a moral combat, must possess many of the same characteristics that mark the warrior in the field of blood. He must be calm and fearless, ready to overcome every barrier of opposition, well acquainted with the position he has chosen, confident in the rectitude of his pur-

pose, and determined to succeed, in defiance of the hosts of his adversaries. Like him, too, after the victory is obtained, he must become the guardian of his troops, restraining their impetuosity, keeping them from excesses, and capable of maintaining the territory he has acquired. All these qualities were eminently possessed by the great champion of the Reformation. His learning, his talents, his accomplishments, his strength of mind, and his fearlessness, all fitted him for the distinguished station he was destined to occupy. His name must ever be revered as that of the great champion of religious liberty.

However we may severally be attached to the tenets of our peculiar denominations—there is no American, be his belief what it may, but must, in one sense, approve of the Reformation. How else can he subscribe, with full and entire approbation, to the clause in our constitution, which leaves to every man the right of indulging, without restraint, his religious opinions, provided they are not injurious to the public morals and happiness? How can there be a bigot here, one who sees no good beyond the narrow limits he has himself marked out—where no creed is a passport to office, or to stations of responsibility and influence? How can there be a bigot here—where the laws protect all equally, by whatever name they may be called, and enforce no tax upon those, who fail to subscribe to the national

rule of faith? The atmosphere would be too pure for one, whose views should be thus contracted and narrow. How hateful such a disposition, and how utterly opposed to the principles we love and cherish. The spirit of intolerance is ever the same. Its violence may be checked, but were all barriers removed, it would appear as hideous now as in years that have passed, when its influence was felt and acknowledged. The soul now under its unhappy dominion, jealous of all who differ with it in opinion, denying them the possession of any good, and claiming for itself unsullied purity and virtue, would, if it were able, seize the fagot and the torch, and compel the reception of its favorite doctrines. If, among the unprincipled efforts which designing demagogues have used in this country, to further their ambitious views, one is more abhorrent than another, it is the effort which has been attempted, to enlist the sympathy of some peculiar denomination for, or invoke the indignation of another, against our various candidates for office. Men guilty of such conduct, are devoid of American principles, and recreant to their duties as American citizens. May their nefarious designs ever receive a just and indignant rebuke from all classes, throughout our wide spread community.

To the principle established by the Reformation, that men are not to be forced to subscribe unwillingly to matters of faith, we yield our hearty assent.

Truth is never to be attained by a blind adherence to matters of opinion, where the heart is unconvinced, be they promulgated from never so exalted a source. She delights in no contracted views, but like the hardy Swiss, pines for the free air of the lofty mountain, from whence she can take an extended survey of the outspread landscape. She demands the candid opinions of all, irrespective of arbitrary distinctions; examines their various claims to her consideration, and decides impartially upon their different merits. Her raiment, like the gorgeous apparel of some Eastern princess, is not the product of a single clime or zone—a hundred lands have contributed their resources towards its beauty and perfection. The North has yielded up its fleecy treasures, and the South its richest stores to form the golden tissue, whilst even the dark recesses of the earth have furnished the sparkling diamond, and the depths of ocean pearls of inestimable value, to render its magnificence finished and complete.

If ever a fallacious opinion was promulgated with any shadow of success, it is the one which discovers danger in the exercise of religious freedom. Is there less of the spirit of Christianity existing among us; is there less benevolence manifested for the unfortunate, or less sympathy exhibited for the wanderer and the outcast, than where the church and state are joined in an unholy alliance, and the support of the sacred ministry wrung from the hands of

the unwilling multitude? If sects are as numerous among us as the leaves upon the trees of our forests, do they not all exist in perfect harmony—the zealous Catholic and the zealous Protestant, the Jew and the Christian, the Calvinist and the Arminian, mutually encouraging each other in labors of love, and joining hand in hand in promoting those great common objects of beneficence, which are designed for the benefit of our entire population? The very diversity of sects is subservient to the cause of truth. Wild and fanatical ~~doctrines~~^{zealots} may have their day—hundreds, nay, thousands may be deluded by their doctrines; truth herself may seem in danger of falling a prey to their ravings—but her own native strength will successfully resist all efforts for her destruction, and her loveliness be the more apparent from the fiery ordeal through which she was destined to pass. The traveller, who has reached the highest top of some lofty mountain, may experience a feeling of bitter mortification, as he discovers the thick mist of the morning rolling its shadowy mass beneath his feet, and concealing from his view the landscape, which his imagination had pictured full of beauty; but every trace of dissatisfaction will be obliterated, as it slowly breaks away, and discloses more loveliness than his brightest fancy had anticipated; whilst he discovers even the cause of his first regret adding enchantment to the scene, as

each bush and spray glitters with the diamonds of the morning.

As Pennsylvanians, we have an especial interest in the history of the Germans. By a reference to the Colonial records, recently published by order of our State Legislature, it appears that as early as the year 1689, unusual privileges were granted by William Penn, to a number of them who settled in the vicinity of Philadelphia. These privileges consisted in an authority to hold a court for recording and trying causes judicially among themselves, which exempted them from the jurisdiction of the County Court of Philadelphia. In the year 1709, a bill was passed for naturalizing certain Germans, specified by name; and in 1730, when a petition was presented by certain Germans, inhabitants of Lancaster county, praying to be naturalized, we find the Lieutenant Governor, in recommending the passage of a bill for this purpose, remarking, "that it appeared to him, by good information, that the petitioners had hitherto behaved themselves well, and had generally so good a character for honesty and industry, as deserved the esteem of this government, and a mark of its regard for them." Since these early dates, numbers of them have settled in various portions of this State, and the population of several of our largest and most important counties, is almost entirely composed of native-born Germans or their descendants. Our commonwealth has prospered

greatly under their influence. Devoted, as most of them are, to the pursuits of agriculture, that influence has been widely and extensively felt. Every one who has passed through our territory, must have remarked the high state of cultivation of their farms, their large and substantial granaries, and the evidences presented, that thrift and industry have contributed towards the appearance of comfort, exhibited about their dwellings. Frugality, temperance, and perseverance, are cardinal virtues amongst them, whilst but few are found the inmates of our Alms-houses, or the solitary cells of our Penitentiaries. There may be an absence of ostentation in their habits of life, but there is no lack of wealth and open-hearted hospitality. They are content to rise from slow beginnings, rejecting, perhaps, the airy dreams of speculation, but delighting in that legitimate toil and application, which generally result in competence and plenty.

A population of such a character cannot fail of conferring real benefits upon the country of their choice. For my own part, I know of no sight, affording more real gratification, than that of the hardy emigrant traversing the streets of my native city, and wending his way towards the west—his well-formed and manly frame, and the ruddy glow of health upon his cheek, bespeaking his foreign origin, and giving promise of successful effort in the country of his adoption. I follow him in fancy to

one of the peaceful valleys of our own, or some other state of this happy confederacy, and gathering, by degrees, the rewards of his industry and perseverance. Soon the broad acres, where lately the forest spread its deepest shades, are covered with the ripening harvest, and the rich sheaves take the place of the heaped-up leaves and brushwood. I follow him still further, until, with honest pride, he can point to his barn well filled with the products of his farm, and to his substantial mansion, giving tokens that wealth has already commenced replenishing his coffers. The stripling, too, who ran by his side when he first landed as a stranger on our shores, has now grown up to a manly size, and is able to appreciate the blessings of our republican institutions. Plenty, and even affluence have crowned his lot, and he realizes, in its full perfection, the glowing language of the poet:

“The father, with sparkling eye,
Gazes down from his balcony
On the wide-spread scene before,
And counts his fortunes o’er;
His winding alleys well lined with trees,
And the crowded cells of his granaries;
Running in waves the tall corn is nodding,
Heavily home his wagons are plodding.”

The topics, gentlemen, to which I have ventured to call your attention, are peculiarly appropriate at the present time. If there are some blessings we enjoy more highly than others, they consist in the

freedom of the press, and the freedom of the conscience. These are privileges to which our attachment cannot be too fervent or sincere, and the birthday of the Father of his country, is a proper occasion, on which to consider their importance. National blessings demand national gratitude,—and whilst our deepest thanks are first due to that superintending Providence, by whose special interposition these blessings were secured, the tribute of admiration should also be paid to the lofty spirits, who were the honored instruments of carrying into effect the benignant decrees of Heaven. The story of our nation's dangers, and difficulties and triumphs, cannot be too much studied, or too frequently narrated. The Jewish father of old was commanded, as he stood, with his loins girded, and his staff in his hand, eating the paschal lamb, with its accompaniment of unleavened bread and bitter herbs, to tell his children, who should inquire the meaning of such solemn rites, the story of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and the overthrow of Israel's enemies by the Angel of Death, and the waters of the Red Sea. It was not enough that Moses had sung his sublime song, and told how the horse and his rider had sunk beneath the waves, and that the chorus of praise had swelled in highest notes, and ascended to the portals of heaven, from those who were eye-witnesses of the momentous events which accompanied the departure from Egypt; but every

Hebrew, in time to come, was bound to keep the solemn feast, and perpetuate its celebration from generation to generation. Like them, let us devote the festal days of our republic to sober meditation and well-disciplined joy, untrammelled by the fetters of party spirit, which merges the feelings of patriotism in sordid designs for individual aggrandizement.

In such moments of reflection, where can I point you to a purer model for imitation than WASHINGTON? At the mention of his name, every chord of the heart vibrates with grateful emotions, and every tongue is ready to acknowledge the influence of his cherished character. The English poet boasted, that it was

“————— praise enough
To fill the ambition of a private man,
That Chatham’s language was his mother tongue,
And Wolf’s great name compatriot with his own;”

but it is our privilege to call the country of Washington our country, and to claim for his love of liberty, his heroism, his fortitude, and his virtues, the admiration of the world.

But whilst we yield the meed of praise to the illustrious dead, let us not be unmindful of our own duties, and obligations. Although I can claim but little more experience than you, gentlemen, at whose solicitation I have ventured to assume the position I now occupy, yet I should fail in discharging the task assigned me, without adding my testimony to the

value of the privileges you are now enjoying, and the means afforded you for fitting yourselves for stations of future responsibility and influence. However irksome may now appear the restraints of collegiate discipline; however tedious the recitation-room, and however unwelcome the hours of study, the student has hardly emerged from the confines of the college, or the last ^{•8 parting advice} words [^]ceased to vibrate on his ear, before he becomes fully sensible, even if he has never been so before, of the important period of life through which he has passed. If he, who has made the best use of his time, and delved the richest stores, feels his deficiency and poverty when he comes into contact with the world, how deep and pungent must be his self-reproaches, who has wasted the golden moments in idleness and folly! There is no time for indolence for those who occupy our seats of learning. The standard of scholarship required is neither trifling nor unimportant. The reward for exertion, is not the cold-hearted liberality of some titled potentate, who buys the adulation to which he is not entitled, and degrades the flight of genius by forcing her to stoop to deeds of baseness and servility, but the approbation of a community, fast advancing in knowledge and information. No rigorous censorship has here become the instrument of tyrannous ignorance, to stop the progress of light, or condemn every thing rising superior to its own ignoble standard. A republic has nothing to fear

from the too great diffusion of knowledge. The sons of America require an education, suited to the circumstances in which they are placed. The structure of our political institutions, our social manners and customs, the absence of hereditary rank and wealth, and the numerous features which distinguish us from all other nations, demand a system of instruction, calculated to secure their perpetuity, and strengthen their influence. A familiar acquaintance with our republican form of government, should constitute one of its chief ingredients. The contamination of foreign opinions, should be avoided with as great anxiety as that, evinced by the framers of our Constitution, in the formation of that immortal document, who would not suffer the dignity of an American citizen to be lowered by the retention of any empty title of nobility, or his integrity to be tarnished, whilst representing the majesty of the people, by the acceptance of any gift, not conferred from the same exalted source.

You, gentlemen, are now occupied in acquiring that knowledge, which you will soon be called practically to use. In attaining the great object in which you are engaged, the exercises of your society will afford powerful and efficient aid. If in nothing else, their beneficial influence will be felt in exciting those social and kindly feelings, which alone cheer the wearisome path of life, and cast a gleam of sunshine over its darkest scenes. The familiar face of

a fellow-student or fellow-member, in years to come, will call up at once a thousand delightful reminiscences, and crowd into a short moment, recollections full of pleasure and delight. Embrace, therefore, every opportunity for the cultivation of such excellent virtues. The elements of discord and strife are sufficiently dominant in the human bosom, as to require but little exertion to call them into tumultuous action; but few are they who possess the magic wand that can still the madness of the tempest, and calm within its influence the raging billows of passion.

In conclusion, gentlemen, receive my earnest desires for your future welfare and happiness, accompanied with the ardent wish, that your present dreams of success may be fully realized, and that you may become the ornaments of this seat of learning—sons of whom she may never have occasion to feel ashamed.

